DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 028 020 RE 001 340

By-Chern, Nona E.

In-Service Education in Reading: The Realization of the Potential. Symposium III.

Pub Date Apr 68

Note-17p; Paper presented at International Reading Association conference, Boston, Mass., April 24-27, 1968.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.95

Descriptors-*Elementary Grades, *Inservice Teacher Education, *Reading Consultants, *Reading Instruction, Teacher Improvement, Teacher Seminars, *Teacher Workshops

Most schools recognize the need to conduct inservice training programs supervised by reading consultants in order to realize the potential of teachers during their preservice education. To be effective, an inservice training program for elementary reading teachers should first be viewed by the participants as an aid to improve the teaching of reading. The administrators should be willing to release time for the program, to hire specialists to serve as resource persons, and to promote an atmosphere of creative and innovative thinking. The reading consultant should have the full cooperation of the entire staff. He should examine the strengths and weaknesses of the reading program through observation, questionnaires, conference with teachers, and examination of test results. He should make himself available and seek out those who may not be aware they need his services. All school personnel should be involved in planning a flexible inservice program based on the classroom teachers' instruction problems. To illustrate these principles, an inservice program is described from its inception to its conclusion. (NS)

IRA, Boston, 1968

Mrs. Nona E. Chern
Chairman for Reading
Rose Tree Media School District
412 N. Jackson Street
Media, Pennsylvania, 19063

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

SYMPOSIUM III - IN-SERVICE EDUCATION
IN READING

Promising Practices in In-Service Education in Reading
Classroom Teachers (Elementary)

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION:
The Realization of the Potential

RE 001 340

INTRODUCTION: The teaching of reading has become a highly skilled task. The day is gone when teachers ask that each child take his turn in reading out loud. The day is gone, too, when teachers follow the teacher's guide slavishly, so that in any given time during any day thousands of children might be asked the same question concerning the same story from the same book.

Materials concerning the teaching of reading have proliferated so rapidly in the past ten years that a teacher of reading is literally swamped with good advice; in many cases, contradicting what the last bit of advice advocated.

Reading conferences surround teachers. As one goes from meeting to meeting, watching demonstration after demonstration, it is interesting to watch, but does not meet the needs of a given teacher. Often the conference features speakers that advocate a type of program completely alien and impractical to the teacher in the classroom. Many times the lecturer seems to live in an ivory tower somewhat removed from the world of children and the daily task of teaching children.

It does not seem to make much difference whether a teacher has been in business, in the classroom for a few years or just out of college, she has problems confronting her that most books and lectures do not seem to reach.

Probably part of the difficulty likes in the pre-training of teachers. It is not necessary to discuss in detail the training of teachers in the colleges. Mary Austin's studies in *The Torch Lighters* and *The First R* have been discussed many times. Many college teachers of reading state that they give the teacher in training "potential" and rely upon the schools that hire them to realize the potential. The schools, fortunately, have recognized the problem, and most of them have in-service education for teachers. Usually the reading training is turned over to a reading

consultant if one is on the staff and from these beginnings teachers can get quality in-service education or if qualified personnel is not available. less than nothing.

The above statement is qualified, since the writer firmly believes that the initial success of in-service education depends upon the definition of in-service education; what it means to the administration, to the teachers, and to the consultants in charge of it. If the entire staff cannot view in-service education as an aid to improve the teaching of reading in the classroom and basically a behavior changing development in the teacher then the whole program is in jeopardy.

The most promising aspect of changing techniques in in-service education is the new view that administrators are taking toward post-service training. Their willingness to allow teachers to have released time, to set aside days for workshops, to allow teachers to visit other classrooms and schools, and in general, foster an aura of learning in the school community is reassuring and encouraging. It is heartening to see that administrators are hiring specialists to take over the job as resource person to the staff, rather than a classroom teacher who likes to teach reading or depend upon the principal who might not know enough to give the teacher real assistance.

Another aspect of the changing ideas in in-service education is the use of many techniques as well as a diversity of programming that can pinpoint the kind of help individual and groups of teachers need or request. The day of the formal in-service program is not on its way out, but certainly

has been placed in the proper perspective of the entire in-service programming. In-service education can be viewed as demonstration lessons, discussion of reading lessons oberved by the specialist; workshop days set aside for particular types of instruction taught by the specialist, a reading committee or outside consultants. The use of training films, video tapes, as well as new programming machines such as the *Study Master* can be utilized, also, to aid teachers in sharpening their teaching techniques. The variety and diversity of programming can be accomplished by creative and innovative thinking.

The district that allows only one type of in-service education is doing a disservice to its teachers as well as pupils. If we are sophisticated enough to realize there is no one way to teach reading, so we should be sophisticated enough to realize that there is no one way to have effective programs. It is essential that the teachers feel that they will grow professionally due to what they are learning and sharing with the specialists and each other. When the program is cut and dried and is all lecture and little participation, in-service education is almost wasted effort. Good in-service programs by their very nature must be the "how to" as well as the "why" in order to have real meaning to the teachers.

THE ROLE OF THE CONSULTANT: The consultant is in a unique position in the school structure. His primary function is a resource person. He is most effective when he has the complete cooperation of the entire administration, supervisors as well as superintendents,

but can still operate satisfactorily, when he does not. By the very nature of his role, he can make an ordinary reading program into an excellent one.

It is important and vital to the entire program how the consultant views himself in his job. Regardless of what the administration tells him his job is, he himself must set standards of behavior as well as the knowledge of reading to deal properly and effectively with the total staff.

The first duty of the consultant is to be available to the entire staff and not place himself in his office for the emanation of the magic words that will improve instruction. If he considers reading a discipline in itself, he isolates himself from the entire school community and creates division rather than unity. He cannot place himself in the position of telling teachers what to do or how to teach any given subject. The reading specialist, instead, should think of himself as an observer, a listener, and a student. The consultant can learn as much as he can teach and do a more effective job as a resource person. It has been often stated that the reading consultant needs to go into the classroom and observe the teacher in the act of teaching reading before he can do anything else. Certainly, there are other means of finding out weaknesses and strengths of the read- program,such as examining the testing results, dicussions with administrators and teachers; but only through observation can one see what is actually taught, rather than what teachers think they do in a classroom.

It is necessary for the reading specialist to ask himself as he observes:

what does the teacher do in the reading lesson that makes it a success or failure? Is the classroom management such that the teacher maintains good balance? Are the lessons over long and tedious? Is the story that is read being "beaten to death"? Does the teacher know how to ask questions that suit the needs of the children and fit the story being used? Does the teacher do all the talking and repeat the answers of the pupils? Does he understand word analysis skills and teach them effectively? Do the skills development plans fit the needs of the children and are the follow-up activities interesting, varied and helpful?

It is important that the consultant confer with the teachers concerning the understanding of the teachers as to what is a developmental reading lesson. It is dangerous to assume that all teachers know this. The consultant would want to know if the teacher understands the different kinds of critical reading skills, the various types of vocabulary skills, organizational skills, and word analysis skills. He would want to know how the teacher plans his lesson. Not only is it vital that both teacher and consultant know the short range plans of the reading lesson, but the long range plans. Is the teacher's object toget through the book, have the pupils pass a standardized reading test, or the test at the end of the book and then go on to the next book; or is it his goal to make reading an enjoyable act as well as a real learning situation for all concerned? Is he not only teaching his pupils to read what the printed page says, but also between the lines and beyond the lines? The crucial question remains:

does the teacher know what reading is about and why we teach it?

With these types of questions in mind the consultant can begin to plan his in-service education for his school to best suit the needs of pupils and teachers.

A FUNCTIONAL PROGRAM: A major concern of the reading consultant is to keep the program functional. By the time the teacher is in the classroom he is not searching for the philosophy or the psychology of reading as much as he needs to know how to teach reading properly.

It has been stated previously that the reading consultant who isolates himself helps no one effectively. The consultant must sell himself as an individual who is willing to assist in any way possible before he can sell a reading program or methods. It has been the writer's experience to have success with an open-door policy, invitations must be extended to come in to brouse among the professional books and materials; to have coffee and a chat; and to be willing to talk in the halls and be ready to answer any questions that might be asked. There is nothing that upsets a teacher more than to ask a question and have the consultant answer it a few days later or worse yet, the following week. If the teacher asks a question, it needs to be answered as soon as possible. The open-door policy becomes meaningless when the consultant cannot, in this instance, give immediate service.

The consultant can also resort to sending out questionnaires, faculty meeting pep talks, and a looseleaf notebook in the office filled with his

wares. In this way the teachers begin to feel that the consultant is there to help, not to criticize, and will be glad to ask for assistance when she thinks she needs it.

Since the object of the reading consultant's role is to help all teachers do a better job in the teaching of reading it should be recognized that many teachers who need help do not realize they need it and might not call on the consultant, so that the consultant needs to rely on his observations and findings in order to plan effective in-service education.

It is helpful if the consultant makes a checklist of all the aspects of the reading lessson. Aaron et al in *Conducting In-Service Programs in Reading (1)* gives examples of checklists that can help the consultant evaluate the reading program. A survey can be carried out in conjunction with the checklist and the testing program of the school evaluated to show weaknesses. These measures can expedite the need for in-service education and can be an effective weapon for the consultant.

PLANNING FOR THE TIME: In previous years most in-service time was scheduled after school or on special days set aside by the administration as in-service days. This type of programming is still going on, but has its draw-backs. The difficulty of having teachers come after school when they are tired can often produce lethargic programs. The in-service days set aside for the school often has the effect of trying to cover too much with little reinforcement and follow-up. The temptation to get in as much as one can is always present, because "when will the opportunity strike again."

Many school districts now have orientation days for new teachers before the school year begins. This can be utilized by the reading consultant to explain the program, go over the handbook and reading materials the teacher will be expected to use and generally explain procedure and answer questions. The reading consultant should be wary of trying to do too much at this time. Many administrators have stated that every school consultant wants to go through the same procedure with new teachers and at the end of the orientation time the new teachers are somewhat confused with all of the guides and procedures they are expected to use and follow and literally follow none of them.

It would probably be wiser for the consultant to use the services of a reading committee, made up of good reading teachers from each school, assigned to help the new teacher with the reading program.

The new trend in programming is to arrange for released time and have the new teachers, as well as other teachers, meet with the consultant in a series of planned workshops twice a week for a number of weeks. When the teachers have settled in their jobs and the reading consultant has visited them in the beginning of the year, the types of in-service programs can be planned to serve the needs of the teachers. If the school cannot give the teachers released time, then the same type of programs would have to be planned after school. It is difficult for the reading consultant to plan on using the district wide in-service days as his exclusive property, since many other areas of the curriculum wish to utilize the same days, so that

the consultant needs to plan on other time for his in-service work. He would consider the district wide in-service days given to him as bonus days and plan accordingly.

PLANNING THE PROGRAM: There are a few basic programs that the consultant can depend on almost every year, and with the help of the reading committee can give wider service and follow-up with good results. New teachers appear to need help in the area of planning a good reading lesson, maintaining balance in terms of time and skills as well as planning for meaningful activities and questions and how to teach word attack skills beyond the first grade level.

The reading committee should meet with the reading specialist long before the actual in-service days are underway. They must go over the plans for the program as well as receive training in leadership. The reading committee can be made up of teachers interested in and doing a fairly good job in the teaching of reading. It might also be helpful for one administrator to be on the committee. The role of the consultant is one of guidance and leadership. He does not have to stand up at all workshop meetings and spout wisdom. Small groups work effectively, with each group being led by a member of the reading committee. For example, if the program will be on planning independent activities, then each member of the reading committee will have materials and plans to know types of activities that one would have children do during a reading lesson. The in-service work would be geared to the actual reading

materials of the children and activities would be based on that material. Teachers would get practice in writing different types of activity sheets based on critical reading skills, organizational skills, vocabulary skills and word attack skills.

Teachers would be encouraged to try planning work sheets on their own to be used with the children, and report back at the next In-Service meeting to discuss success or failure. Time must also be set aside to revisit teachers after the In-service Program to check success of training as well as opportunity for individual aid.

Off the cuff programs have their merits - but the consultant would probably be the only one that could handle this. The planned program, in the long run, benefits more people and will get better results. Total commitment to in-service education can produce more effective teachers as well as more cooperative teachers. When the program is planned so that the teachers will use the new knowledge they have gained in their classroom, then it will be successful.

Aaron, and others (1) as stated in *Conducting In-Service Programs in Reading* five characteristics of a good in-service program. If the reading consultant keeps them in mind then the program should be successful. They are:

1. Goals and desired outcomes are defined in the beginning.
2. The program is based upon classroom teachers' instructional problems in reading.

3. The program is flexible. (Modification of over-all plan sometimes takes place.)
4. Program provided for follow-up activity and individual work.
5. Time given to in-service work is planned and adequate.

AN IN-SERVICE PROGRAM FROM ITS INCEPTION TO CONCLUSION: It should be the practice of any reading consultant to sit down with the administrators to discuss with them what they would like to do to improve the reading program--to talk over the needs of their new teachers and how to improve the teaching techniques of some of the "experienced" teachers.

At the same time the reading materials be discussed and some of the research findings gone over concerning many of the problems they have expressed. Administrators who have previously been "blocks to progress" often become allies when they have an opportunity to sit down with a knowledgeable reading specialist.

Once the reading specialist has the green light for his in-service programs, his next step is to meet with reading committees, and discuss with them the problems and begin planning a constructive program. Small groups are planned for--each committee member to act as a group leader. The committee discuss objectives and methods. If role-playing is to be used, then committee members volunteer and practice sessions are set up. The committee is ready to go into action when needed.

It is imperative at this time that the consultant visits the

classroom and observe the teachers at work. One visit often is not enough. The consultant should plan to return the next day if necessary to see an entire reading lesson. Regimentation often creates confusion and sometimes leads to the teacher putting on "a show" for the consultant. Once the observations are complete the consultant must arrange for a conference. It would also be helpful if the consultant would refrain from taking notes while visiting. This is often disconcerting to the teacher. The consultant needs to be wary of his opening remarks to the teacher, and if the in-service program is to succeed the reading consultant must never be in the position of a critic. One successful consultant often begins a conference with this: "What did you think of the reading lesson I observed? What did you like about it? Is there any part of it you would like to improve?" From these beginnings the teacher is glad to discuss with the consultant some of her problems she is encountering, and usually asks for help.

The reading consultant then asks the teacher if she would like a demonstration lesson. No teacher ever refuses this ploy and a time is agreed on. The consultant should not try to teacher a "perfect" lesson, but one that he would reasonable expect a good teacher of reading to use. After the completion of the demonstration, another conference is held and the teacher and consultant go over the parts of the lesson that differed from what the teacher usually does.

Sometimes demonstrations can be arranged using the cluster idea.

Teachers can be released to observe the consultant teaching a given class. This is a practical approach for the consultant, and can be arranged so that the primary teachers can observe the consultant teach primary children, the intermediate teachers watch a lesson with children of this age level, rather than the consultant doing a demonstration for every teacher in the system which can be time consuming.

The next step toward the workshop meetings should be centered around grade level meetings with the teachers to discuss mutual problems in the reading lesson. It is also helpful if the teachers would bring with them any test results they might have concerning the reading program. The consultant can discuss with them how to evolve a program around the weaknesses shown by tests, whether teacher-made or standardized. At this time the in-service workshops are discussed and a program planned with the teachers to meet their needs. It is rare that the reading committee and the teachers are not together on what the needs are. The planning is flexible enough to add to it, if teachers express needs that the committee have not planned.

The workshop meetings are planned for the equivalent of one period or one hour, depending on the time factor. After each learning session the teachers are urged to try out what they have learned that day and report back their progress.

Each lesson is usually based upon a story that could be used by the teachers in the classroom. The material is taken from a series not used

in the school. The teachers are given the opportunity to write out or plan what they would do through discussion. The technique is introduced by the consultant or leader, and then the team leaders take over the work within smaller groups. When the work is completed the teachers are asked to share what they have written. Often role-playing is involved. As an example - if the task is to learn how to ask inferential questions, the leader may do one or both of the following techniques. The leader will have the teachers read a selection and then ask them only questions that are inferential in nature. The teachers would respond as if they were the class. The one method is done skillfully by every teaching standard. The other technique is for the leader to plan a good lesson, but use every poor teaching method at her command. The teachers are then asked to analyze each lesson, methodology, as well as manner of presentation. Through this method undesirable teaching techniques and practices are brought up without recriminations and the leaders can show change or modify teacher behavior and practices without pointing the finger at any individual.

At the second session the actual work can begin. Transparencies are often used to introduce new skills. After the skill is introduced, such as asking inferential questions, each teacher is given a short selection, one or two practice questions are offered and then the teachers are given ten minutes to write as many inferential questions as they can from the short selection. They are then discussed. The next step is to work with an actual selection that the teachers plan to use in the

classroom. The leaders help the teachers plan the questioning, and the teachers are then asked to use them in the classroom. The final step is to bring back the results of the material they planned. Each session, a ten minute question time is set aside to discuss new problems that have arisen or material that did not work out as expected. At no time is a teacher shut off. They are encouraged to ask questions until they get answers that satisfy them and serve their needs.

Principals should be asked to attend the sessions so that they too, can keep up with the program. One of the reading committee should serve as secretary and record each session's proceedings. These minutes can then be distributed before the next meeting. Workshop programs are usually more effective if they are carried out over a period of time. Six to eight sessions are recommended, depending upon the program planned. Flexibility can be observed for allowing an extra meeting or two if the teachers request it, or the reading committee feels the necessity for more time.

When the workshop sessions are over the reading consultant should plan to revisit the teachers to see how effective the in-service program was. It could also prove fruitful, if a survey was sent out to evaluate the in-service program. This would aid the reading committee to make changes if necessary.

CONCLUSIONS: Regardless of the type of in-service programs the school offers to its professional staff the major emphasis should be on practicality.

The reading consultant should remember at all times that he is a resource person, a person trained to help those who need help in the teaching of reading, and the professional growth of the teachers he works with are his primary concern. The success of failure of the in-service program depends in no small measure upon the successful rapport of the consultant with the rest of the staff. Each year's in-service program is an out-growth of the year before and the knowledge that the teachers have learned something meaningful that benefit them as well as their pupils.

---

1. Aaron, Ira, Callaway, Byron, and Olson, Arthur. *Conducting In-Service Programs in Reading, Reading Aid Series*, (edited by Ira Aaron), Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1965 (pp. 4-5)